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International Narcotics Control Strategy

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Following is a statement by Joseph H. Linnemann, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of International Narcotics Matters, before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, November 13, 1981.

I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss the Department of State's role in our efforts to control illicit narcotics. Events of the past year, both in the United States and abroad, have reinforced our view that international narcotics control is an integral part of U.S. foreign relations. As President Reagan emphasized in New Orleans on September 28, an attack on drug trafficking is "one of the single most important steps that can lead to a significant reduction in crime." A key element of the antinarcotic strategy the President outlined was "a foreign policy that vigorously seeks to interdict and eradicate illicit drugs wherever cultivated, processed, or transported." Toward this goal, he announced the creation of a special council on narcotics control to coordinate efforts to stop the drug flow into this country.

Within that context, I welcome this opportunity to present the Department's overall international narcotics control strategy and describe some of our specific programs.

Background

First, let me put it in relative fiscal terms. Illicit drug sales in the United States are estimated by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to exceed $80 billion a year. In contrast, the overall Federal budget devoted to the suppression of drug abuse is under $1 billion. Approximately 95% of that amount is expended here in the United States for law enforcement, demand reduction, and addict rehabilitation. The remainder is devoted largely to international programs planned and implemented by the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics Matters. For FY 1981, our budget totaled $35.9 million.

The Department's primary goal in coordinating our international effort is to motivate and assist foreign governments in curtailing the production of illicit drugs at their sources and to immobilize major traffickers who smuggle these drugs into the United States. Since the appointment of the Department's Special Adviser on Narcotics Matters in 1971, we have placed highest priority on those drugs that have the most serious health, social, and economic consequences; i.e., heroin, cocaine, and marijuana.

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The bureau follows a three-pronged aproach in pursuing that goal. It can be characterized as:

- Illicit production control and interdiction through enforcement;
- Drug income alternatives where necessary;
- Demand reduction and prevention.

Underpinning these approaches is a sustained diplomatic effort by the Department and our overseas missions to secure the cooperation of producing and transit countries in the global fight against drug abuse. Unless we insure a cooperative international environment, other U.S. agencies, such as the DEA, the Customs Service, or the Coast Guard, could not operate effectively with their foreign counterparts. More specifically, the Department, through government-to-government agreements and appropriate international agencies, seeks to provide the legal and organizational framework (for seizure of illicit assets, mutual judicial assistance, ship boardings, U.N. drug control conventions, etc.) within which much of our international effort operates.

The principal focus of the bureau's effort, within these three general approaches, is direct technical assistance. In FY 1981, it obligated $26.2 million for country programs.

I would now like to go into a review of the environment of illicit drug activities in Asia and Latin America and how our individual country programs are designed to counter them.

Southeast Asia

As a result of the excellent growing conditions for poppies in 1981, the production of opium from the three countries of the Golden Triangle (Thailand, Burma, and Laos*) rose from an estimated 200 metric tons in 1980 to an estimated 600 metric tons in 1981. Unless there is a significant climatic change, the 1982 production could equal or exceed the 1981 figures.

*Since 1975, the Lao Government has limited the size of the U.S. Embassy to a small number of people who are prohibited from leaving the capital city of Vientiane without permission. Therefore, there is no U.S. program in Laos at the present time.

Thailand. The Royal Thai Government, however, has promised to carry out eradication programs in 10 zones in northern Thailand that, as a result of U.N. crop substitution programs, are designed "opium free." We recognize that, in terms of gross amounts, eradication of poppy fields in these 10 zones is less than ideal. However, if the eradication is carried out effectively, it will indicate to the poppy growers in other villages that their government is serious in its commitment ultimately to eradicate all opium poppies grown within its borders. This could have a deterrent effect on poppy planting even in areas where economic and social development have not yet achieved the level deemed necessary for the government to mount similar programs.

Another aspect of the narcotics problem has, over the past 6 months, shown marked improvement in the Golden Triangle; there has been a decline in availability or lack of precursor chemicals (e.g., acetic anhydride), used to refine opium into heroin. Reports from northern Thailand indicate that as a result of Thai Government efforts the amount of acetic anhydride reaching the northwest border refineries has dropped significantly; the refineries are having considerable difficulty converting the bumper stocks of raw opium into heroin. We have encouraged the Thai Government to continue restricting the illegal use of this chemical. At the same time we have encouraged them to increase surveillance activity on the Thai/Malaysian border to prevent a compensating increase in the number of heroin refineries in that area, since precursor chemicals come into Thailand across the Malaysian border. The Malaysian Government is also attempting to make it more difficult for these chemicals to enter th country either legally or illegally.

The Thai Government has made repeated promises to arrest the notorious "drug warlord" Chang Ch'i-fu, leader of the Shan United Army (SUA), and has also posted a $25,000 reward for his capture. The SUA is estimated to control some 70% of Golden Triangle heroin refining. Chang Ch'i-fu resides in a fortified area with several hundred armed guards near a small village in northern Thailand. The Thai Government is quite aware of Chang's location and activities, but has been unable to do much about arresting him.

Burma. In Burma, the bureau's assistance programs focus primarily on contract maintenance for the fixed wing and rotary aircraft provided several years ago for narcotics programs. We in the bureau, with the Burmese Government, are aware that ultimately long-term success in reducing the production of opium and heroin in Burma must combine rural development and crop substitution with enforcement and eradication. The recent visit to the United States of the Burmese Deputy Minister of Agriculture underscores the importance the Government of Burma places on such programs.

Large-scale enforcement operations against opium refineries have made successful use of aircraft to ferry personnel to staging areas. Bureau-funded aircraft have also been used in support of poppy destruction programs in inaccessible areas.

To counter the narcotics problem in Southeast Asia, the bureau supports programs in enforcement, crop substitution, and demand reduction. In FY 1981 it budgeted $7.7 million for Thailand, Burma, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The majority of the funds go to Thai and Burmese programs. In addition, bureau funding has encouraged regional enforcement cooperation through funding of police training for students from ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) countries and activities of the Colombo Plan Drug Advisory Program.

In Southeast Asia there are six U.S. Government employees in narcotics-related positions. Two employees are career Foreign Service officers who staff the Narcotics Control Unit in Bangkok. In addition, in Thailand there is a U.S. Customs officer (detailed to the bureau), an American electronics specialist, an American aviation maintenance specialist, and an American demand reduction specialist (detailed to the bureau). We believe that the combined efforts of our enforcement, demand reduction treatment, and crop substitution programs have the greatest chance of long-term success in reducing the growth and refining of opium and the trafficking and use of narcotics in Southeast Asia.

Local commitments to do something about the problem are clearly growing in Southeast Asia—but at an uneven pace. The governments of Burma, Thailand, and Malaysia all recognize that they have a serious narcotics abuse problem among their own youth. Indonesia has less of a problem and less concern. All four countries recognize that they are major narcotics trafficking centers and, in the cases of Burma and Thailand, major growing areas as well. The activities of the four governments vary, however. In Thailand our greatest difficulty is in encouraging Thai motivation and action to follow through on their promises. Opium eradication has been promised in Thailand for several years. This year, if the Thai Government fulfills its current commitment to us, will be the first year that any significant eradication has taken place—albeit in a limited area. In Burma the motivation exists to do something about the growing of opium. However, the Burmese Government is unable to exercise effective control over most of the opium-producing areas.

Southwest Asia

Although the focus of this hearing is on Southeast Asia and Latin America, I would like to make a brief reference to Southwest Asia in order to keep the other two areas in context.

The recent arrest here in Washington of four Pakistani heroin traffickers and their American contact points up the fact that most of the heroin now being smuggled into the eastern United States is from Southwest Asia. Because we have no access now to the opium growing areas of Afghanistan and Iran, we do not have reliable estimates either of how much opium is being produced in either country or how much of the opium produced there reaches the United States as heroin.

Opium production in Pakistan for the past 2 years has been in the 100–125 ton range, down from the record 700–800 ton 1979 crop. Three factors account for this: 1) a government ban on poppy cultivation in the "settled" areas, which produced 300 tons of the 1979 crop; 2) farmers' depressed prices because of larger stocks remaining from the 1979 crop; and 3) adverse weather conditions.

We cannot do anything directly about production in Afghanistan and Iran, so we are concentrating our current efforts on encouraging enforcement of the Government of Pakistan's ban on cultivation in additional areas of the Northwest Frontier Province and in interdicting heroin trafficking en route from Southwest Asia to the United States as it passes through Turkey and Western Europe.

Latin America

I would like to turn now to the current narcotics situation in Latin America. Latin Americans, because of their geographical proximity and cultural ties, are much more attuned to our society than the more distant Asians. They are, for example, aware of the perceived ambivalent attitude toward drug abuse among major elements of our population. This relative familiarity with the controversy over drug use here adds a unique complication to our programs in Latin America. We frequently must seek to convince influential private and public figures of the *bona fides* of U.S. motives when we urge them to take strong and politically difficult measures to control illicit production and trafficking to the United States—the ready market for lucrative exports from their frequently weak economies. Otherwise responsible Colombian businessmen, for example, have charged that our desire to eliminate Colombian marijuana production is designed to "protect the U.S. marijuana producers' market."

Latin America's importance as prime supplier of illicit cocaine and marijuana for the U.S. market has increased as production has expanded in Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia. The latter is also a major trafficking country. Trafficking has proven to be a devastating social and economic problem for the small Caribbean states—Bahamas, Jamaica, etc.—through which the bulk of the illicit drug flow passes en route to the United States. It is therefore a bilateral political problem for the United States in an area already sensitive because of economic and security threats. With this in mind, let me give you a progress report on our current Latin American programs.

In FY 1981, $17.1 million, or over 60% of our overall country program assistance, was expended for our Latin American initiatives.

Mexico. Mexico historically has taken great pride in maintaining its independence from the United States and traditionally has accepted no U.S. economic assistance. However, as the magnitude of illegal narcotics production grew in Mexico during the 1960s and U.S. concern increased, and given the Mexican perception that American demand created the narcotics problem, the Mexicans felt that U.S. assistance in sharing the costs of the massive control program was appropriate.

The narcotics eradication program which we undertook in cooperation with the Mexican Attorney General's office has become our largest International Narcotics Control (INC) initiative. Over a 10-year period, the United States has invested more than $95 million of INC funds in this joint venture. Although we do not have access to Mexican budgetary figures, we estimate that they are currently spending three to four times as much as we are on the program. Our major expense has been for aircraft and aviation maintenance. No U.S. assistance has been needed for crop substitution, since opium growing on a large scale is a recent phenomenon and the Mexican Government does not feel obligated to provide aid to growers it puts out of business (in marked contrast to the situation in traditional producer countries).

The key to the success of the eradication campaign in Mexico was the government's November 1975 decision to use herbicides. They had never been used in a nationwide campaign for narcotics control, but ad hoc manual eradication had not been equal to the task—even when helicopter logistical support in 1975 doubled the amount eradicated. In 1975, an estimated 65 tons of opium was grown, producing 6.5 tons of heroin. At the high point in the eradication campaign, 1977, some 10,000 hectares of opium (enough to produce 10 tons of heroin) were destroyed. By 1980, less than one ton of Mexican heroin entered the United States. There are, however, recent indications that heroin production is increasing, as the Mexican poppy growers use more and more sophisticated means to avoid detection and thus eradication.

Colombia. Colombia continues to be the major processor of cocaine hydrochloride, supplying at least 50% of the U.S. and world markets. (Nearly all of the cocaine is, however, produced from coca derivatives originating in Peru and Bolivia.) Colombia also provides an estimated 70% of the marijuana smuggled to the United States. Our contributions to the INC programs in Colombia totaled $32 million through 1981. (This total is somewhat misleading, however, since it includes a "one-shot" amount of $16 million, which Congress mandated for Colombia for FY 1980. These funds have been apportioned among Colombia's three armed forces, the National Police, and the Customs Service, principally to procure narcotics interdiction related commodities.) The FY 1981 program extends support at a level of $3.6 million.

The majority of this new funding ($1.7 million) will be used to assist the National Police—since May 1980 the primary Colombian Government agency for narcotics enforcement. Since the first of January 1981, the National Police has deployed more than 1,000 men throughout the country in new anti-narcotics units, launching an increasingly effective interdiction campaign. Lesser, but still substantial amounts, will support the Customs Service, Ministry of Justice activities, and the Attorney General's office.

With regard to marijuana and with reference to my earlier remarks, I would note that the single most effective solution to the massive Colombian export of this narcotic is an eradication effort. Enforcement and interdiction alone simply cannot suppress the flow. Our ultimate objective is, therefore, to cooperate in an eradication program in Colombia. However, we are hindered by a legal prohibition against working toward eradication internationally through herbicidal spraying. Until progress on this front is brought about, we will not be able to convince the Colombians to agree to undertake the most potentially effective antimarijuana campaign.

Ecuador. The bureau has maintained a program in Ecuador because of the country's importance as a trafficking link for coca derivatives and cocaine moving from Bolivia and Peru to Colombia (and ultimately the United States). We have provided commodity and training support for narcotics control programs to the Customs Military Police and the National Police. At various points from 1974 to 1979, limited funding was also committed to the Ministries of Health and Education for drug abuse education programs. In September 1980 a program agreement was signed with the newly formed National Directorate for the Control of Illicit Narcotics (DINACTIE) in the Attorney General's office. To date these limited funds have been dedicated to drug abuse education programs. However, the DINACTIE is also charged with the investigation of major traffickers operating in Ecuador. While the group is still in the formative stages, there is substantial potential. Thus, in FY 1981 the INC program modestly supports this operational and enforcement side of DINACTIE also.

Peru. Since 1978 the Department has been working with the Government of Peru to support programs designed to reduce the production and trafficking in illegal narcotics at their source. The U.S. Government has provided a total of almost $7 million in assisting the Peruvian narcotics control program. While the initial thrust of our support was weighted heavily in favor of enforcement activities, the current trend is toward a balanced program of enforcement, education, and income substitution as a more effective strategy to combat the problem.

We have entered into project agreements with a variety of Peruvian agencies involved in the narcotics control effort. We are especially interested in enhancing the operational and intelligence coordination among all Peruvian narcotics enforcement agencies. Among these groups, the Peruvian Investigative Police and the Guardia Civil have been the principal recipients of U.S. aid. The police have received $1 million in U.S. financial assistance and the Guardia Civil $740,000 over a 3-year period (FY 1978–FY 1980).

Our other programs in Peru include assistance to the Guardia Republicana and the Peruvian Customs Service. The former is involved with border control and the latter with normal export/import control activities. We have also been cooperating with the Ministry of Education in a modest drug abuse education and prevention program within Peru.

As noted, our long-term thrust in Peru is a balanced, integrated program. In 1981 a major and unique step forward was made with the inauguration of the Upper Huallaga Valley project. This area of Peru is the country's largest single source of illicit coca production and has been the target of previous limited bureau-supported eradication activities. The recent quantum step forward is a joint effort by the bureau, AID (Agency for International Development), and the Government of Peru which targets an estimated 17,000 hectares of illicit coca cultivation in the valley. This 5-year agricultural development and coca substitution project is the first U.S. Government-supported experiment in which the long-advocated strategy of coordinating the bureau's support for enforcement with AID's development assistance will be implemented. The AID project, which was signed with the Government of Peru on September 15, calls for a loan and grant of $18 million to finance a program of combined agricultural research and extension credit, and other developmental activities in the Upper Huallaga. The bureau plans, contingent upon annual appropriations, to expend $15–20 million on enforcement and eradication of illicit coca in this and other areas of Peru over the same 5-year period.

Bolivia. U.S. INC assistance to Bolivia began in FY 1975 with a small pilot project to investigate the potential for a crop substitution program. Bilateral agreements were subsequently signed in 1977 for two different areas of activity: expanded investigations of alternate crops, and assistance to the National Directorate for the Control of Dangerous Substances for narcotics control *per se*. Further agreements were signed in 1978 and 1979.

The long-term goal of both the alternate crops and control projects was to reduce coca production in Bolivia to the level required for legal internal use and drug manufacture and to severely curtail illicit exploitation of coca leaves.

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The experimental and study phase of the agricultural development project was essentially completed by the end of 1980. Earlier in the same year, AID had prepared a draft project paper for a full-scale agricultural diversification project in the Chapare region. Consideration of this project was suspended after the military coup d'etat in Bolivia in July 1980.

The bureau has maintained, however, a substantially reduced level of assistance to the Bolivian counterpart agency, *Proyecto de Desarrollo "Chapare-Yungas"* (PRODES). We have sought to maintain PRODES as a viable institution in order to have in place an organization that could resume a diversification program quickly should the government demonstrate a capacity for narcotics enforcement in the future.

As to the future, the United States has, of course, just taken the first step toward normalizing relations with Bolivia, based, *inter alia,* on some positive signs on the antinarcotics front. However, any return to a full bureau program is dependent on further demonstration that the current Bolivian Government is seriously committed to erasing the legacy of the past and undertaking effective action to combat both the production of and trafficking in cocaine.

Brazil. Since 1979, Brazil has shown evidence of becoming an important cocaine transshipment country and the principal source for acetone and ether used in cocaine refinement in Bolivia. Fairly sophisticated drug distribution networks transship cocaine from Bolivia through Brazil for ultimate sale in the United States and Europe. Our goal is to assist Brazilian authorities in curtailing the processing and transshipment of coca derivatives.

In September 1981, the United States signed a project agreement with the Federal Police, which is under the Ministry of Justice and is the agency within the Brazilian Government with primary responsibility for narcotics control. Approximately $200,000 will support interdiction operations aimed at disrupting trafficking at selected spots in key border areas. The components of this project will be primarily river patrol craft and telecommunications equipment.

If the results of this new cooperative operation are positive, we plan to continue to support the Federal Police in its border interdiction program.

The Caribbean. Trafficking routes for at least 70% of the cocaine and marijuana and a major portion of the illicitly produced dangerous drugs entering the United States pass through the Caribbean. General aviation aircraft and marine vessels are the most common mode of trafficking, but commercial aviation is also used, particularly for cocaine. Traffickers often operate from bases in countries where they have established a working relationship with government officials. Many landing and refueling operations which are vital to the traffickers operate as legitimate businesses, or with very transparent camouflage. Furthermore, genuine shortages of local enforcement resources and the innumerable isolated airstrips and harbors from which traffickers can operate help to produce an environment that is truly hostile to interdiction efforts.

The impact of this flow on the United States—especially Florida—has long been obvious. The Attorney General of Florida reportedly has described the trade in cocaine, marijuana, and illicit Quaaludes as "the biggest retail business in our State," amounting to approximately $7 billion per year. But the affected Caribbean countries are only now beginning to perceive the serious social, political, and economic problems for themselves stemming from the traffic.

We are undertaking a Caribbean regional narcotics program aimed at establishing a basis for better coordination between the Caribbean countries, particularly Haiti, the Bahamas, the Turks and Caicos, and U.S. enforcement agencies (i.e., DEA, Coast Guard, and Customs). The main thrust of this funding is to improve interdiction results in the Caribbean, pursuing eradication efforts if deemed feasible, and operational support efforts.

Jamaica has a special place in our Caribbean strategy because, in addition to being a logistical stopover for transiting traffickers, it is the only significant narcotics source country in the area. Approximately 10% of the marijuana smuggled into the United States is grown in Jamaica.

Marijuana, known as *ganja* on the island, is widely used among Jamaicans. Complicating the situation, Rastafarians and the members of the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church, religious groups native to the island, use marijuana in their liturgies.

Until recently, Jamaica's economy had followed a downward spiral for several years. Currently, income from marijuana cultivation and trafficking has risen to a point where it may be surpassing that of any one of Jamaica's traditional foreign exchange earners. Most Jamaicans have benefited economically, at least indirectly, from the marijuana trade. As a recent *Business Week* article noted:

> In recent years, local marijuana traders have replaced U.S. tourists as major suppliers of dollars for Jamaica's dwindling foreign currency reserves. "Washington's crackdown on *ganja* is really hurting us," says one Kingston merchant. "Some people call it dirty money, but until the tourist industry is revived, many of us can't get along without it."

We are, of course, prepared to assist the Jamaicans in interdicting trafficking through and from the island and in controlling the production of marijuana surplus to that of Jamaica's own domestic consumption.

Functional Activities

I would like to end my discussion of specific geographic areas here and move on to a few functional activities which touch equally on several areas of the world: narcotics demand reduction, which I have referred to previously in connection with individual country programs, international narcotics control training, and our support for multilateral programs.

Demand Reduction. In FY 1981, the bureau provided $1.5 million to support programs designed to reduce demand for illicit drugs in countries which are involved in the production or transit of drugs destined for the United States.

We have found that the existence of a demand reduction program enhances the awareness of local public leaders of the potential or actual threat drug abuse poses to the host society. This in turn strengthens the government's commitment to the production and trafficking control programs which the bureau emphasizes. We have also found,

particularly in producing countries, that stable populations of illicit drug consumers provided an additional economic incentive to illicit producers. These addicts are a ready local market for relatively unrefined drugs, like opium, and serve as a hedge against fluctuations of the international drug market. Finally, large numbers of chronic consumers of illicit drugs may destabilize societies friendly to the United Staes by reducing the availability of effective manpower in the workplace; supporting corruption, criminal trafficking elements, and other drug-related crime; and exacerbating other economic and social problems.

International Narcotics Control Training. Bureau-funded training activities are aimed primarily at improving the enforcement capability of foreign narcotics officials, and are designed to increase professional cooperation between U.S. enforcement authorities and those of other countries.

Most of the training is carried out by DEA and Customs in time-tested courses and in special programs designed to meet specific requirements. Both agencies conduct advanced courses for high-level foreign officials in their U.S. training centers, while training for line officials is generally offered abroad in special in-country programs. Beginning in FY 1982, DEA will conduct its advanced international narcotics control training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center at Glynco, Georgia. DEA and Customs also provide courses to improve domestic training capabilities of responsible agencies in the cooperating nations. During FY 1981, DEA and Customs provided training to over 1,000 foreign participants in courses overseas and in the United States.

Bureau-funded training also includes the executive observation program, through which senior foreign government officials involved in narcotics control activities visit this country. Besides exposing these key visitors to U.S. agencies and procedures, this program develops personal ties of communication and cooperation between U.S. and foreign government officials. During FY 1981, the bureau funded the visits of 12 senior government officials from nine countries.

Multilateral Programs. So far I have spoken mainly of our bilateral narcotics control efforts. But we also work through various multilateral agencies and contribute to the U.N. Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC). I would like to cite here an important recent development by which the U.N. drug control system will assist us in reducing a major form of drug abuse in the United States.

One of the most popular illicit pharmaceuticals here is methaqualone, most frequently marketed under the trade name Quaalude. Hospital emergency room mentions of methaqualone during the first three quarters of 1980 totaled 3,374, up almost 100% from the same period in 1979. Although most of the illicit methaqualone has been smuggled from Europe to clandestine laboratories in Colombia for entabletting, it appears that, in the near future, Colombia may no longer be a major supplier.

For some time, we have urged the Colombian Government to ratify the U.N. Psychotropic Substances Convention of 1971, the international agreement under which the shipment of licit raw materials for methaqualone, which is later diverted to illicit production, can be controlled. The convention has serious implications for domestic pharmaceutical industries which makes ratification a sensitive economic issue. As you know, the U.S. Senate did not ratify the convention until last year. The Colombian legislature did so in September 1980, and final ratification is expected by the end of 1981. Colombia will soon be able to notify the U.N. Commission on Narcotic Drugs that licit imports of the raw materials for methaqualone are prohibited. Exporting countries, in this case the Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland, would then be obliged to halt shipments to Colombia and, in doing so, cut off supplies now diverted to the clandestine laboratories which supply the U.S. market.

The United Nations own program activities to control illicit drugs are funded through voluntary contributions given to UNFDAC by the United States and several other countries. Since its establishment in 1971, UNFDAC has helped to emphasize the fact that the problems of drug abuse know no national boundaries and therefore require worldwide cooperation. UNFDAC has also been able to work with countries whose cooperation is vital to U.S. narcotics control interests, but where political circumstances inhibit U.S. bilateral assistance.

The bureau hopes to make another contribution to the fund in FY 1982. UNFDAC's 1982 program will support crop substitution projects in countries which are the main producers of illegal opium, notably Burma, Thailand, Laos, and Pakistan. With the support of Congress, we intend to pursue our efforts to suppress illicit narcotics production and trafficking as close to the sources of illicit narcotics substances as possible. ■

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